



1 Plans Business

ver.

We understand that we will have to take on well-funded and powerful special interest groups to make our goal a reality.

During the last Albuquerque City Council election, an out-of-state special interest group spent tens of thousands of dollars defeating a pro-job creation candidate. This Washington, D.C., political action committee spent more money in four days than most council candidates spend for an entire campaign.

Their stated interest is pursuing a radical, anti-business agenda that includes such things as government-run health care and putting in place an exorbitant government-mandated wage structure, like that recently passed in Santa Fe. Their philosophy is in line with extreme environmental thinking that puts the rights of the silvery minnow ahead of our children.

While this out-of-state PAC has a constitutional right to express its opinions, so do the common-sense people of Albuquerque.

Our agenda is simple: Grow jobs in Albuquerque. We have a great city made up of wonderful people. The members of Citizens for Greater Albuquerque live here, work here and raise families here. We know changing local politics will take a united community.

Working together, we can make Albuquerque a city full of hope and opportunity — where every child can grow up and look no farther than his or her own hometown for a good, high-paying job.

Nuke Waste Tests Wasteful

BY REP. JOHN HEATON
Carlsbad Democrat

For many years, I have closely followed the scientific studies evaluating the development and operation of the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, the country's repository for transuranic waste.

In its 2001 report on WIPP, the National Academy of Sciences recommended the elimination of waste characterization requirements that "lack a legal or safety basis."

According to the academy, the procedures "without a technical or legal foundation" are: headspace gas sampling and analysis, sampling and analysis of homogeneous waste, and visual examination to confirm radiography. Let me explain why I feel so strongly about this finding.

■ Headspace gas sampling and analysis requires workers to establish a pathway into a radioactive waste container to attach a sample line, frequently done with a large needle. Average cost: \$600 per container.

The 40,000 waste containers currently in the WIPP underground collectively contain only 2 cubic feet of volatile organic compounds of concern. This is equivalent to the amount produced by a 5-ounce bottle of fingernail polish remover, if allowed to evaporate.

■ Statistical sampling and analysis of homogeneous waste frequently requires drilling into a radioactive waste container using a large drill to obtain a core sample. Average cost: \$87,000 per container.

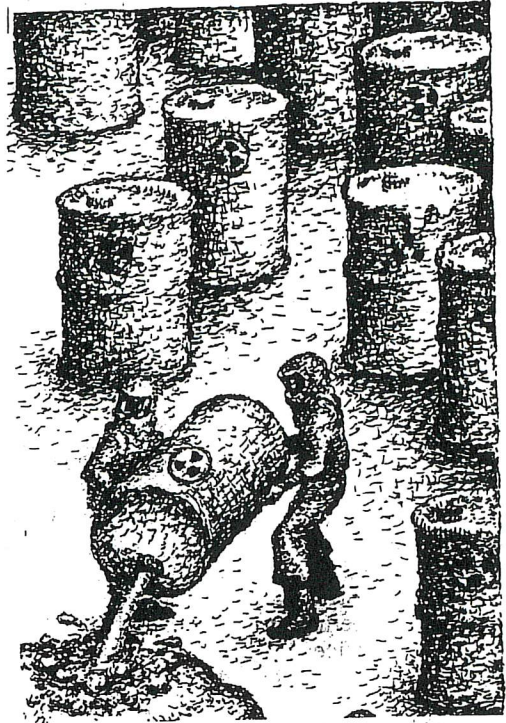
■ Statistical visual examination to verify radiography results requires workers to open a radioactive waste container and physically sort through its contents. Average cost: \$22,000 per container.

These three procedures are the ones that Sen. Pete Domenici seeks to eliminate because, as the academy observed, the tests increase safety risks, provide useless information and are unnecessary.

This is why I strongly support the language in the legislation proposed by Domenici, R-N.M. These "superfluous procedures" are the only tests that Domenici's measure seeks to eliminate.

The safety requirements that dictated the venting operations at the Idaho waste facility Aug. 13 that resulted in hydrogen burning inside a drum (which had been sealed for 28 years), will not be eliminated, relaxed or affected by the passage of Senate Bill 1424.

The best way to protect the New Mexico public, the workers, and the environment



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from hazardous organics is monitoring at WIPP.

In a statement to the National Academy of Sciences last October, the Environmental Evaluation Group concluded that monitoring at WIPP would "detect concentrations that are three orders of magnitude below allowable permit limits."

In an ideal world, the Department of Energy would submit a permit modification to the state to eliminate unnecessary test procedures that increase risks, and the modification would be approved in a timely manner.

However, the permit modification process in New Mexico has historically been extremely inefficient. The one major permit modification processed by the state took 613 days, even though the NRC had already approved the proposed approach.

Domenici's legislation will improve the safety of the public and the workers in my district and across the nation. It will ensure the protection of our environment in the most efficient manner.

This federal legislation on WIPP does not pit state against federal government. Instead, it provides much-needed leadership in regulating radioactive

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